Animal ACADEMY

はこぶね白書 HAKOBUNE HAKUSHO

4

MOYAMU FUJINO

[4]
HAKOBUNE
はこぶね白書
HAKUSHO

Cartoon by
MOYAMU FUJINO
藤野もやむ

Animal Academy: Hakobune Hakusho Volume 4
Created by Moyamu Fujino

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Volume 4
by
MOYAMU FUJINO

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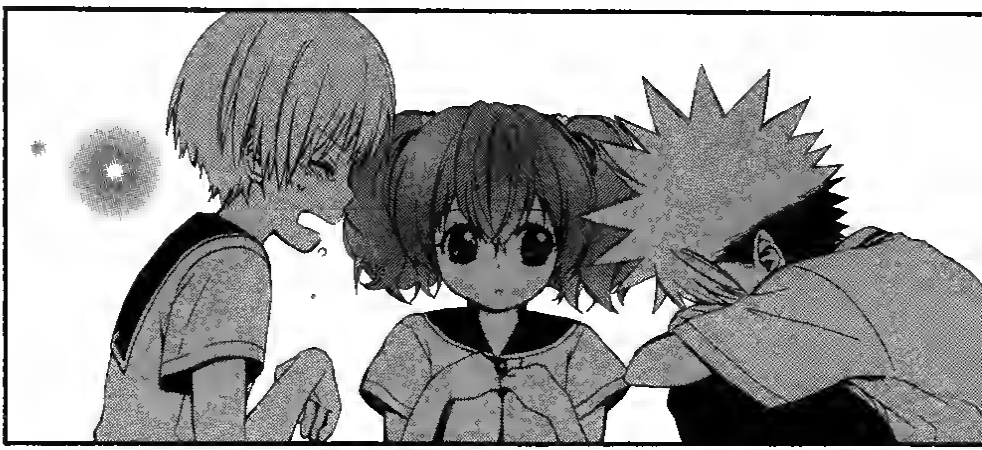
It was just another morning.
Same old school.
Same old classroom.
White-1
Same seat by the window.
Everything was exactly like the day before.
rattle

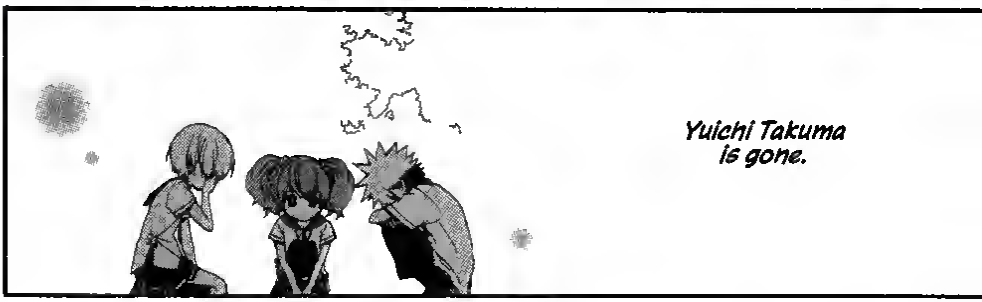
But one person...
...was missing.

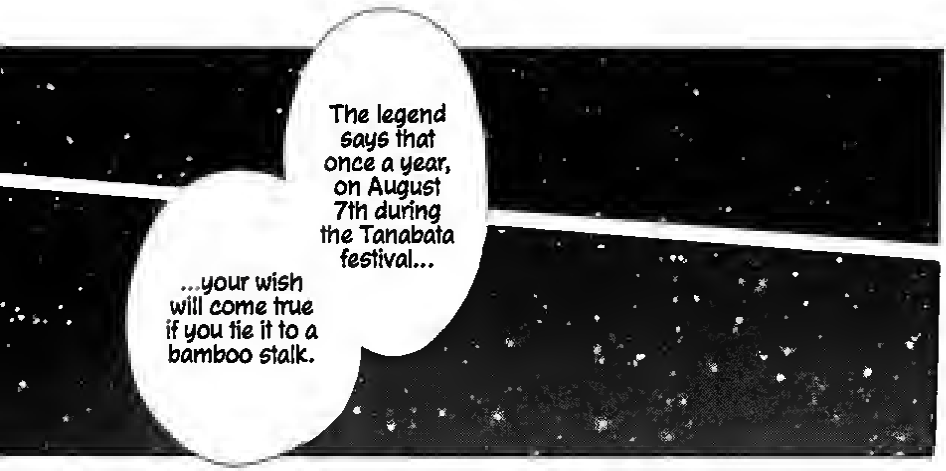
Report.15 Tears on the Page

なぁに
What's that stuff coming out of your eyes?
ん～

I can't hold them back.





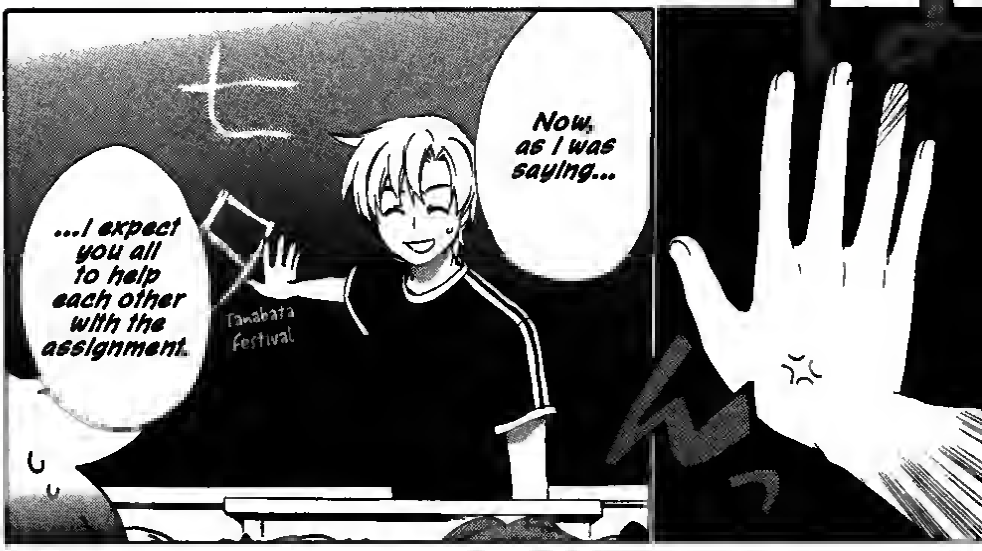

The legend says that once a year, on August 7th during the Tanabata festival...
...your wish will come true if you tie it to a bamboo stalk.

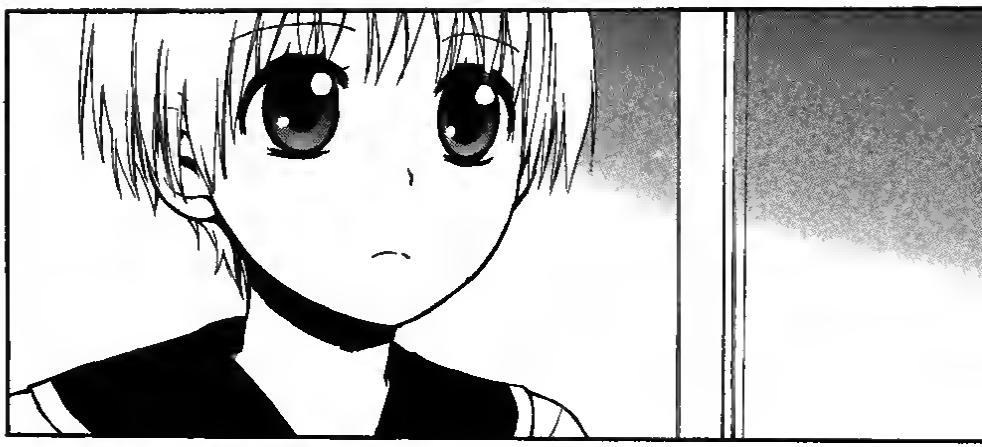
So now...
...I'd like you...
...to find a nice tall bamboo stalk...
...and cut it, so you can each...
...make your own wishes.
Wow, they all got serious fast.
Without further ado...
Good luck!
Watanuki-sensei?
Give it a rest, Kotaro.
We don't need to hear it *again*.

You're just gonna ask when Takuma's coming back.
I didn't even say anything!
You've asked every single day!
If you're so sad without a roommate, I'll trade with you.
So it was you, Ranmaru!
Say what?
Yuichi wouldn't have left for no reason!
I know you're behind it!
What --?!
I didn't do nothin'!
Takuma left of his own free will!
Don't blame me!
Anyway, I never liked him from day one!
He always acted like some kind of *human*--

S-sorry. My hand slipped.
Hey! That hurt!
Oops!

If you'd all kindly be quiet!
Why're you still talking about it?
So why'd Takuma leave, anyway?
I didn't do anything!
Ranmaru-kun, no fighting in class!


Now, as I was saying...
...I expect you all to help each other with the assignment.
Tanabata Festival



I really do think...
...something happened to Yuichi.
Somebody must've done something so bad to him that he *had* to leave!

Although we kinda had a fight yesterday, too.
I can't quite figure it out...
Nah.
Think it was Ranmaru?
I really don't get what Yuichi was thinking.
But...
...I do know the enemy's close by.
"Enemy"?
He almost had you, Miiko.
Daily Dose of Miiko
.....

I swear...
...whoever it is, I'll kick his butt.
That was pretty cool, Kotaro.
Thanks.
?
And me...?
I'm still not over it.
Oh, no.
I'm tearing up again.
ぐすっ
Takuma-kun...

Should I have just said, "Okay, see you later"?
I should've told him not to go.
If I'd just held on to his hand...
But that just would've made it harder for him.
I'm so confused, I can't even think straight.
Gather 'round, everyone!
Trying not to yawn.
What're you doing?
...we could have talked it out.
?
I can't get all choked up like that!

I was so surprised when you hit Ranmaru-kun!
Was I? I didn't notice...
Oh ...
That.
Yeah, Ume-chan?
Fukuta-san?
You don't need to pretend, you know.
Although I don't know how useful I'd be.
If there's any way I can help, just tell me.
Sorry for scaring you earlier.
Thanks.
We're ...
...not talking about the same thing...
I mean... Takuma-kun gave up trying to become human halfway.
That's hard to deal with.
You think so?
I'm sure lots of the others feel the same way as you and Kotaro-kun.
Oh, I wasn't scared ...

It was so hard listening to everyone talk about Takuma-kun...
...when they didn't know the first thing about him.
How would it feel to suddenly learn you're not human?
So hard.
Snap out of it!

I never knew there was a shrine all the way out here.
Hmm...
I wonder...
.....

...that's it!
A shrine archway!
Good! Now write down your wish and sign it.
Did everyone get a piece of paper?
Wait, what am I doing?
Why the heck did I draw that?
Well, no harm done.
My wish!
.....

Please come back.
Neko Fukuta
.....
Maybe if everyone...
...makes the same wish, he really will come back.

I want to see you.
...wow!
Miko!
Your writing's a lot better!
You can read it?
I sure can!
.....
Heh!

Heave, ho!
Heave, ho!
I hope some of Miiko's "I want to see you"...
...Is meant for Takuma-kun.

Please work.

Today was a real workout.
.....
I'm beat!
!
I bet it was about Takuma-kun.
I wonder what Kotaro's wish was?
MEMORIGLEN

きょろきょろ
Sasuke-kun?
You could've just *given* it to me...
Honestly...
.....
.....
3
4
5
The first-year white class.
Aha!
Found it.
Baseball Club
Art Club
Basketball Club
Journalism Club
Soccer Club
Soccer Club
Music Club
Baseball Club
Volleyball Cl
Journalism
Tennis Club
Art Club
Bask
Club
Ninja Club
Sewing Club
2/28
8/13
2/28
4/10
8/22
7/27
8/25
4/5
9/4
8/29
4/1
3/7
3/2
9/5
9/9
4/19
8/27
3/12
2/22
3/20

I can't find Takuma-kun's name.
ズキ…
twinge
Shin 8/13 Art Club
Takahiko Nagao 2/28 Basketball Club
Rammaru Fushi 4/10 Journalism Club
Hanabisi Matsukura 8/22 Soccer Club
Ruka Mushigo 7/27 Soccer Club
Chousuke Yamakawa 6/25 Music Club
Ruchia Aimi 4/5 Baseball Club
Wakaba Usui 9/4 Volleyball Cl
Raira Eisaji 6/29 Journalism
Umeka Kamak 4/1 Tennis Club
Toko Kotoko 8/7 Art Club
Umeko Kogan
Miiko Sizuk
Umiru Take
Mino Tsuk
Rin Tom
Neko Fuk
Unuu Mo
Shin Tagoori 8/13 Art Club
Takahiko Nagao 2/28 Basketball Club
Rammaru Fushi 4/10 Journalism Club
8/22 Soccer Club
Yamakawa
Aimi 9/
Usui 8/29
Eisaji 4/1 Te
Kamak Art C
Kotoko
Kogan
Sizuk
Take
Tsuk
Tom
Fuk
Mo
Chousuke
Ruchia
Wakaba
Raira
Umeka
Toko
Umeko
Miiko
Umiru
Mino
Rin
Neko
Unuu

I'm signing up for basketball!
.....
Please don't...! Please don't disappear!

Please don't erase him...
Araki
Karamatsu
Kinoshita
Kimura
Sagami
Takuma
Tagoori
Nagao
Fushi
Mat
Harabei
Ranmaru
Takahiko
Shin
Yuichi
Sasukei
Mokichi
Kagekuma
Silvino
Kotaro

Huh?
?
H-how did that happen...?
Sasuke
Yuichi
Takuma
Tagoori
Mokichi
Sasuke
Yuichi
Shin
... circles?
8 / 13
8 / 29
2 / 28
4 / 10

Girls' Dorm
Boys' Dorm
Go away!
I'm not changing rooms!
Come in here again and I'll bite you!
Stupid Kotaro!
He's been acting like a jerk ever since Takuma left!
Calm down, Ranmaru.
Chill.

He treated everyone like a friend.
He took everything in stride.
Kotaro never used to get angry, even if you swiped his lunch.
Right back atcha!
Kotaro Araki is under the impression someone drove Yuichi Takuma away.
That "someone" is now his enemy.
Ranmaru Fushi...
What kind of enemy?!
An enemy?
You know, I think he was talking about an enemy at lunch.
.....
You're not doing yourself any favors.
...your bad attitude about Yuichi Takuma is backfiring on you.
You really shouldn't say you're happy that he's gone.

You're making it hard for the whole class.
I second that.
Sigh...
.....!
SLAM
!

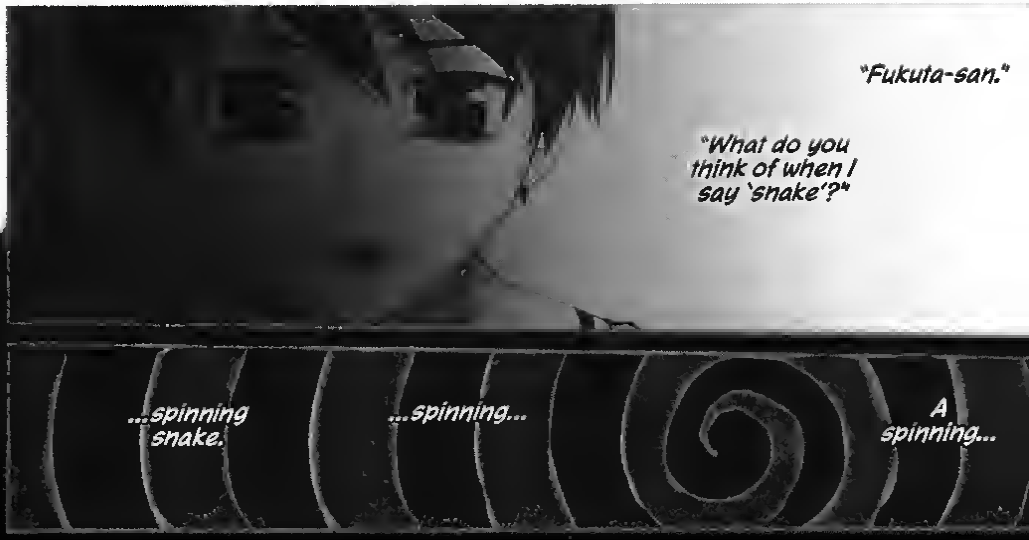
CLICK
Ah.
Sasuke.
Were you in my room?
ニヤ
What do you mean?
Well? Did you go in or not?
Your life could depend on the answer.

.....
I've never gone in.
Is that the truth?
I just said I didn't do it!
What's with you?
I see.
Never mind. No big deal.
...what gives?
.....
It's nothing.

ちょっと…

lokichi
Sasuke
Yuichi
Kimura
Sagami
Takuma
Tagoori
Input Unknown
Input Unknown
8/29
2/28
.....
My tears--!
.....
.....
...who's there?

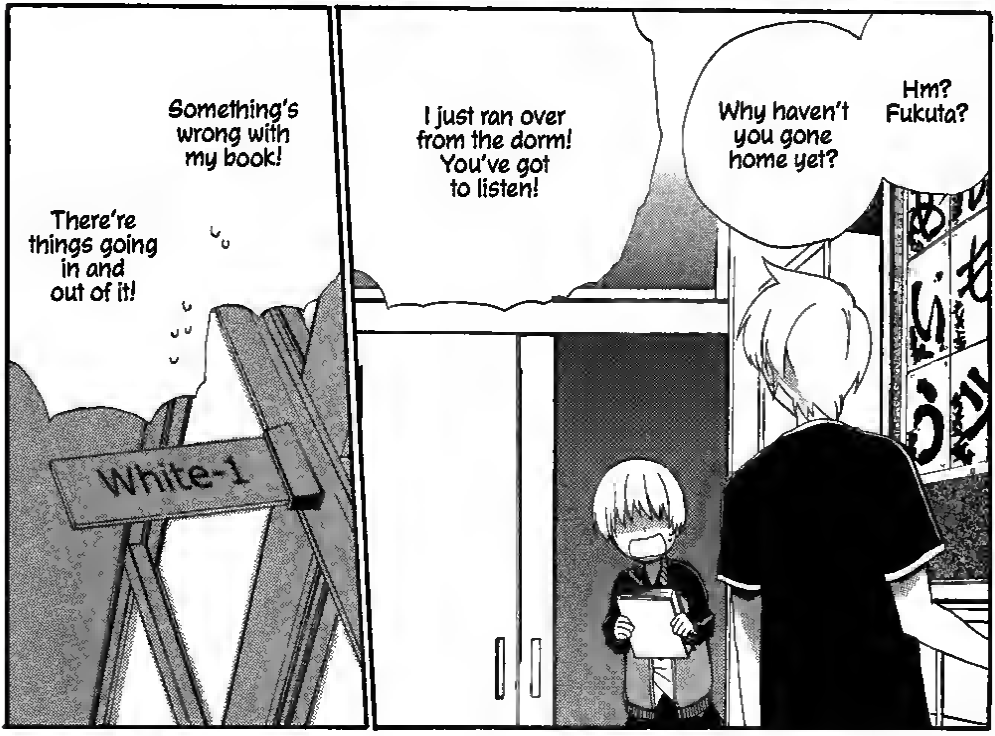
スゥ…
MORIMORIGITEN
盛森
……!!



Spinning through the darkness.

Report.16
re: Reality World

W-Watanuki-sensei!
S-s-s-something came out of my book!


Hm? Fukuta?
Why haven't you gone home yet?
I just ran over from the dorm! You've got to listen!
Something's wrong with my book!
There're things going in and out of it!
White-1

Huh?
Aren't you supposed to hang on to that for all three years?
giving it back
Oh! I forgot to thank you for letting me borrow it!
.....
I'm... supposed to keep this?
Is...
Is that true?
Uh...
Three years?
I think so...
... yeah.
?
Isn't that what it's for?

It'll do a lot for you.
...huh?
What *is* it for...
...exactly?
なでなで
Talking it out will make you feel better.
Oh, well.
The least I can do is listen to what's bothering you.
.....
Doesn't remember why she came running in a panic in the first place.
?
.....

As for Miiko, who was left behind...
Fune?
?

It isn't here.
In that case...
Hmm?

What're you up to?
Well, if it isn't Sasuke.
.....
What was with you earlier?
Did you lose some-thing?
.....
So either *you* took it or some freak stole it.
Yeah, you could say that.
You don't just *lose* something that big, though.

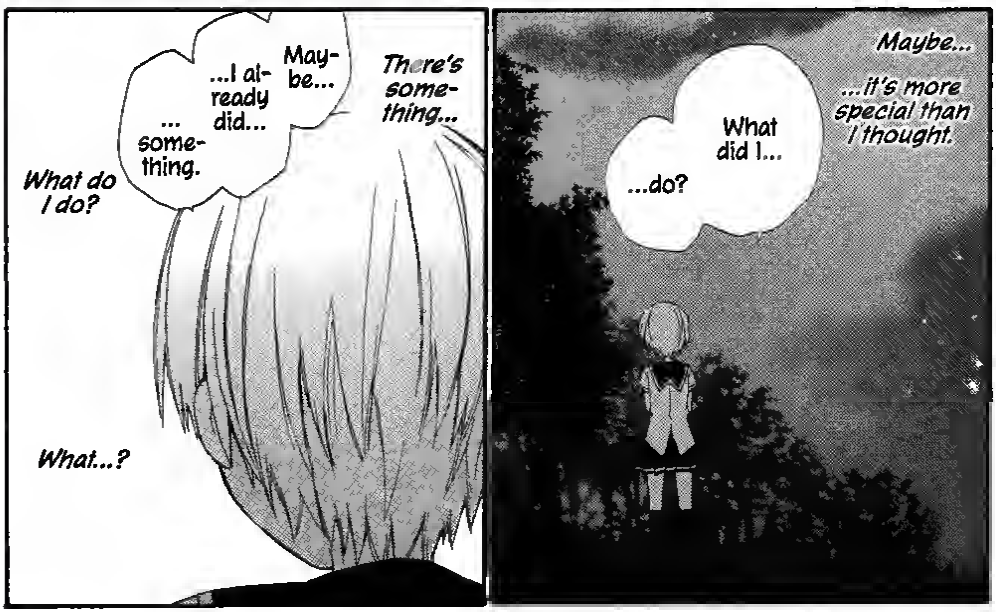
Or if it wasn't either of those things...
...then maybe it wandered off on its own.
This is all turning into a bigger hassle than I expected.
Even the opening in the barrier has gotten shaky and unstable.
And there are way too many humans wandering around.
すと、

Just so we're clear, Sasuke...
...don't even think about getting in my way.

That's right.
Maybe I should talk to Sasuke-kun about this.

But then again...
...maybe...
"Pfft."
...I shouldn't show it to just anyone.
Technically it doesn't even belong to me.
I wonder...
...if Sasuke-kun would know anything?
It didn't seem like he had his own, though.

Why do I...
...have to keep this thing?
I have to keep it for three whole years?
Until graduation?
How come?


Maybe...
...it's more special than I thought.
What did I...
...do?
There's something...
Maybe...
...I already did...
...something.
What do I do?
What...?

Will I be able to...
...go back to the way things used to be?
Back to my friends and family?
Neko Fukuta
I...
Shiver

Fukuta-san?
I don't even know what to think anymore...
What're you doing out here?
Hello? Personal space?
Ahh--! Yusuke-kun!
You forgot some-thing?
Really ...?
I-I was just heading back from the school.
I...
...forgot some-thing...
... there.
Like a text-book?
You sure are a good student
I-if you say so.
What about you, Yusuke-kun?

Wow, you're a romantic!
I came out to look at the stars.
Me? Well...
Oh, that!
It's not your fault!
I didn't mean for things to end up like this.
I really am sorry.
Huh?
I heard about what happened ...
...with Takuma-kun.
Listen, I'm sorry.

Kotoko

Toko

Koyanagi

I get the feeling that...

Umako

Suzuhara

...I don't belong here.

Miiko

Takaku

Urara

Tsukigusa

Mino

Tome

Rin

Fukuta

Neko

Morizo

"I promise I'll do my best!"
Fukuta-san?
DM!
O-of course I'm sure!
Um, Totally yeah! fine!
You okay?
Are you sure?
"You don't need to pretend, you know."

I'm sorry, but...
But I'm...
"Although I don't know how useful I'd be."
I'm sorry.
"If there's any way I can help, just tell me."
I'm a...
...human.

Eep--!
MORIMORI GITEN
His grip...
...on my shoulder...
...kinda...
That hurts...

...you're trying really hard, Fukuta-san.
I know...
You don't have to force yourself to be here.
You don't have to fight so hard.

You...
...really think so?
I dunno.
I...
Was I really...

"You don't have to be here."
"It's okay."
Fune!
Where'd you go?
What do I do?
I'm really starting to doubt myself.
SLAM

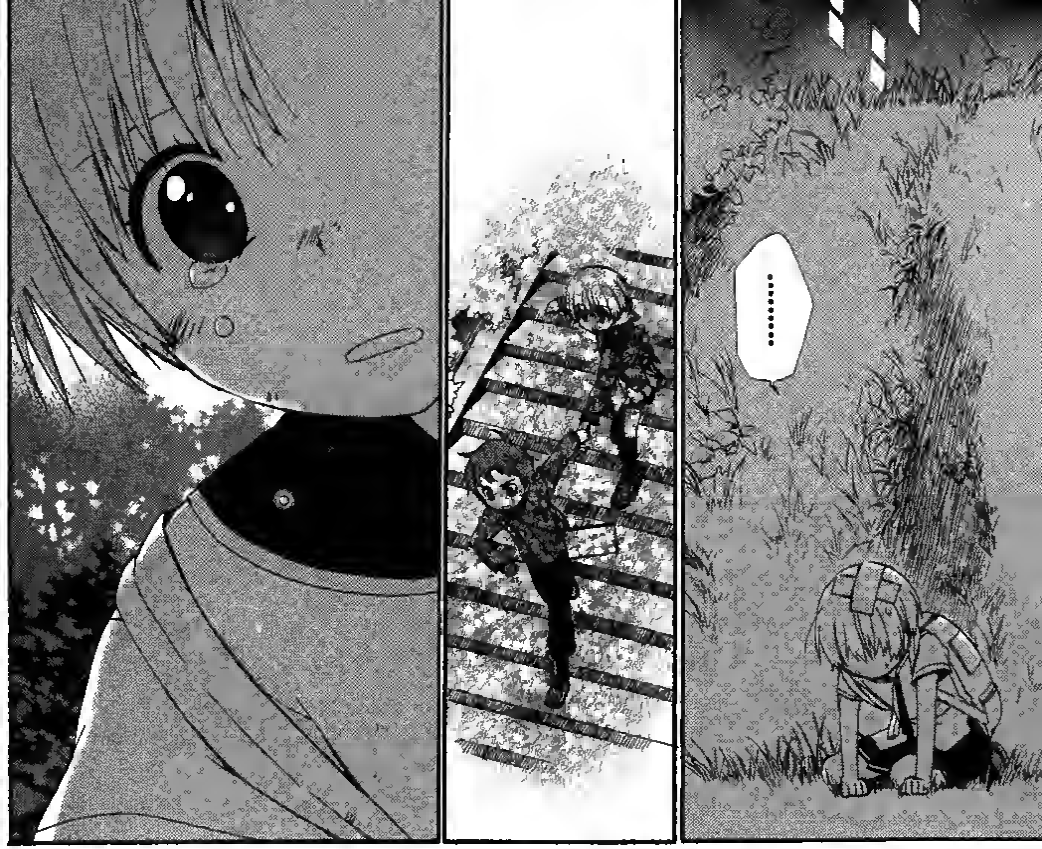
ガッ!
ガッ!
もぞ
もぞもぞ
Fune?
What are you doing?
I'm...
...packing.
How come?
I think.
.....

I'm sorry, Miiko.
It's...
...because I'm a human.
Fune?
はぁ?

I'm...
...hu-
man!

.....
It's true.
.....
Take...
Take care, okay...?
ぎゅっ
ぎゅっ

And I can't accept that the weird student handbook is just some perfectly normal thing.
They're magical animals. We're just too different--!
Too much has happened.
It's too much.
That's right.
It's wrong for me to be here!
Oof...!
ドサッ
trip

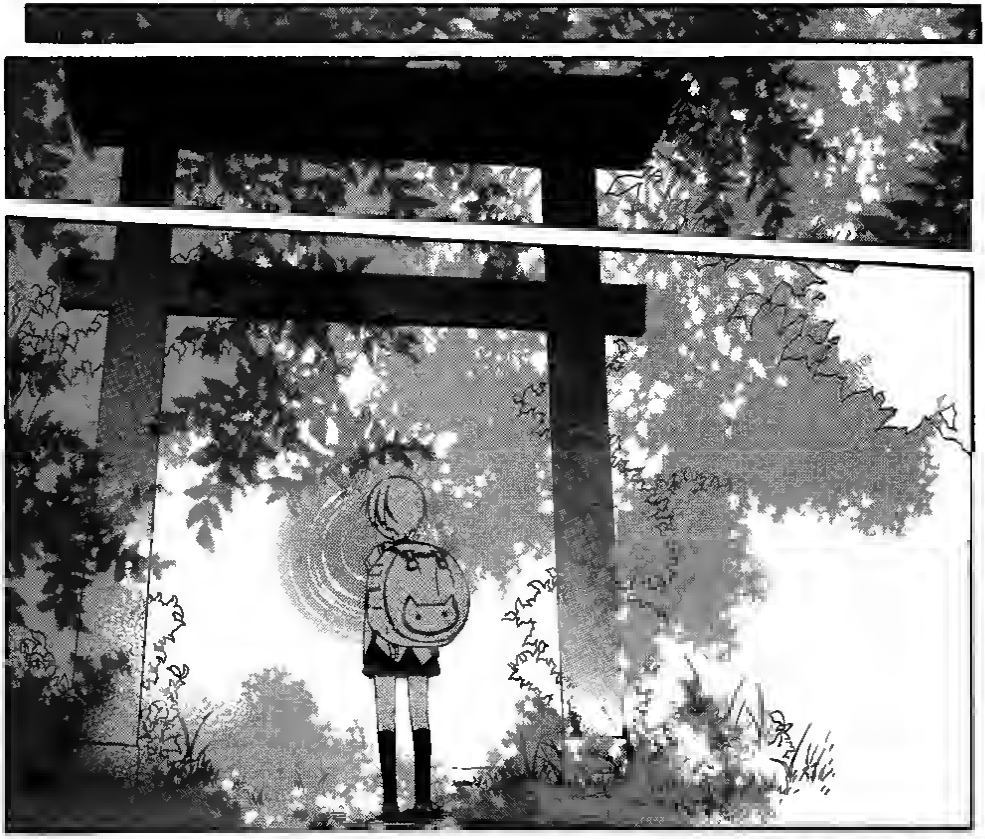

.....

...huh?

Sasuke?
.....
He untied himself?
Oh, he broke the branch.
He sure is desperate.
Not that it makes any difference.
NORINORI CHI TEN
!

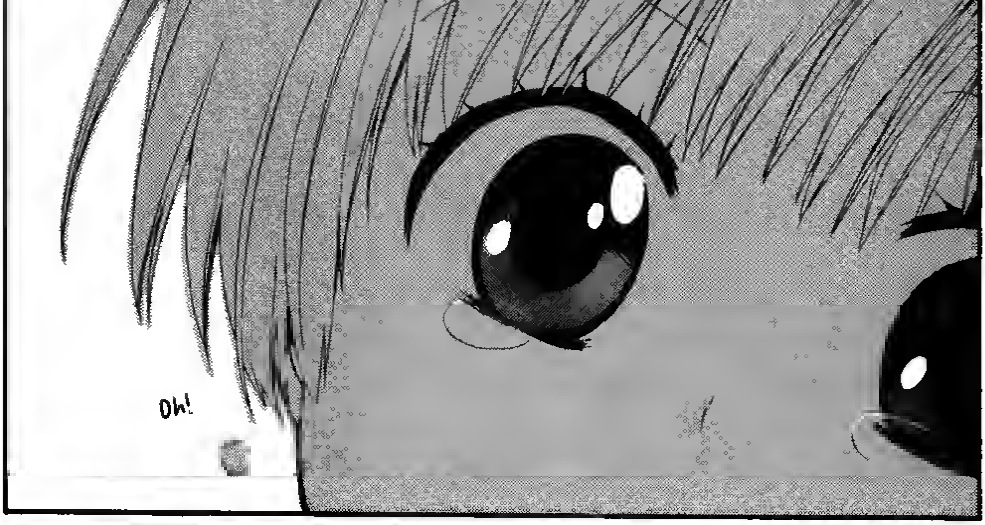
What now?!
Huff...
H-hurry! You...have to go...
Find Fukuta-san....

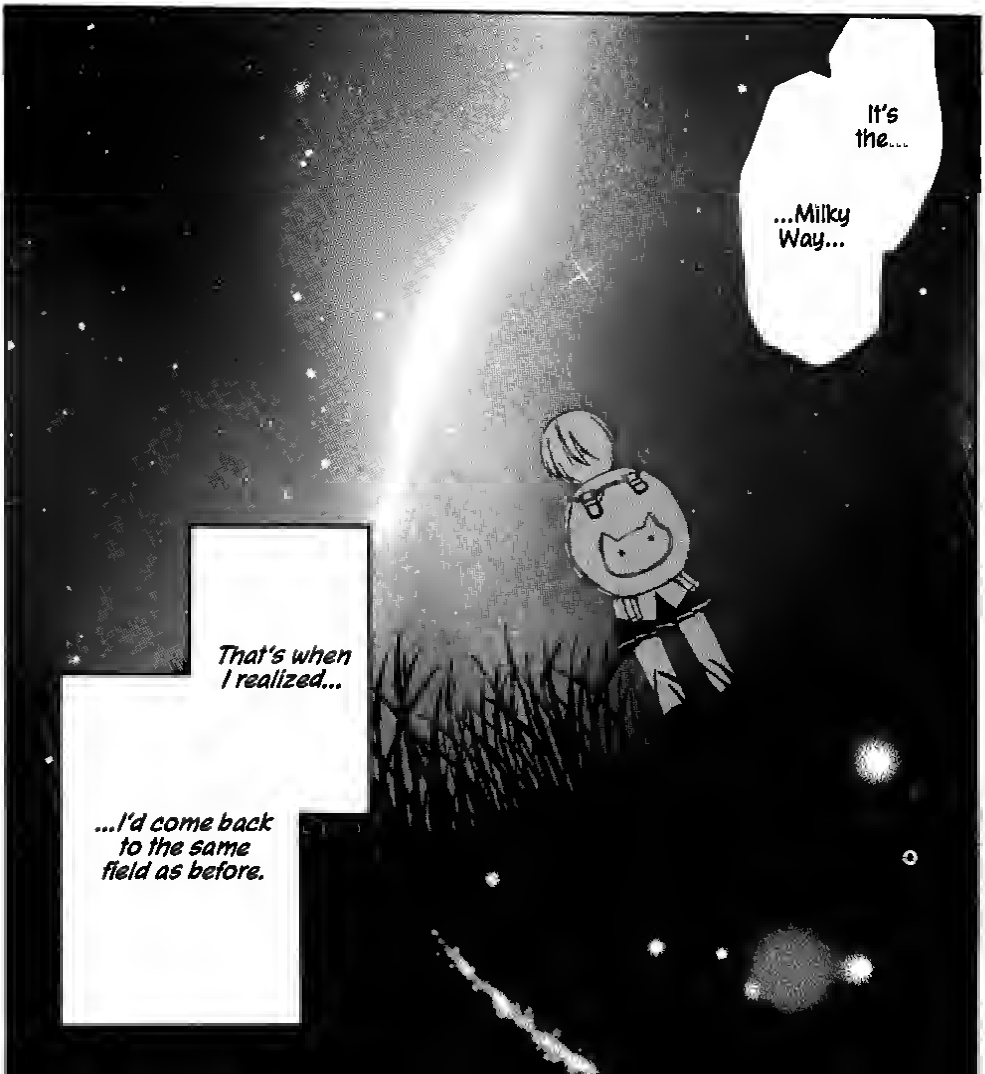
I can't be the one who does it!
It has to be you!
.....
Hurry and stop Fukuta-san!
Or else she'll end up just like Takuma-kun!
ばっ
?
What's going on?
Murmur murmur



Oh yeah ...
I can't leave...
... through here.
So what do I do now?

What do you say at a time like this?
What do i do?
What do I do?
My head's spinning.
I can't even think straight!
Please let me out? Please open up? I want to go? None of those are right.
What is it? What is it?!
Spinning and spinning and spinning...

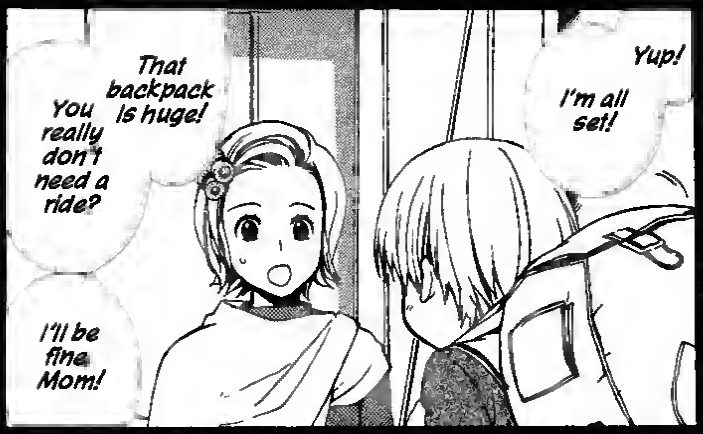

Oh!


It's the...
...Milky Way...
That's when I realized...
...I'd come back to the same field as before.

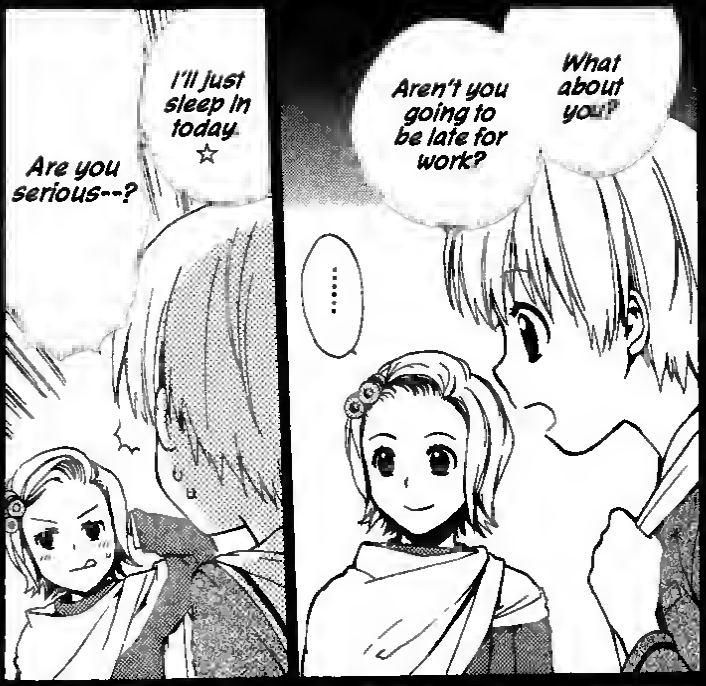
The Tanabata story says two lovers were banished to opposite sides... ...of the Milky Way because they neglected their duties.
I ran through the dark without looking away...
ズル
Oof!
...tripping again and again.
...in the direction he'd pointed in that day.
But nothing could keep me from running...
I felt as if I was running through a dream...
Lights kept flickering in and out.
I realized they were so blurry because I was crying too hard to see them.
...and then I jumped above the train.

Report.17

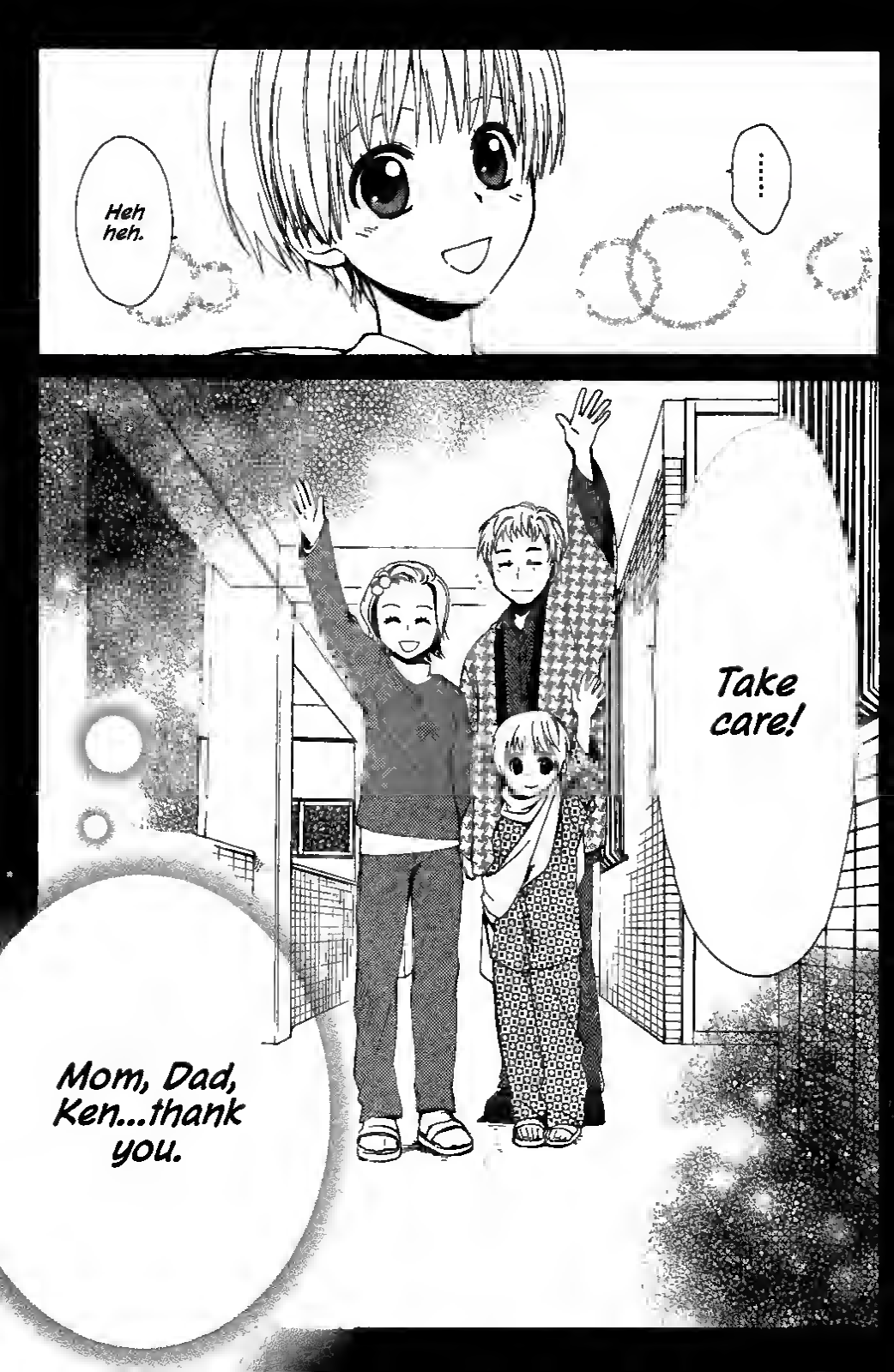
The Door to Anywhere and its Key



You're sure you're not forgetting anything?

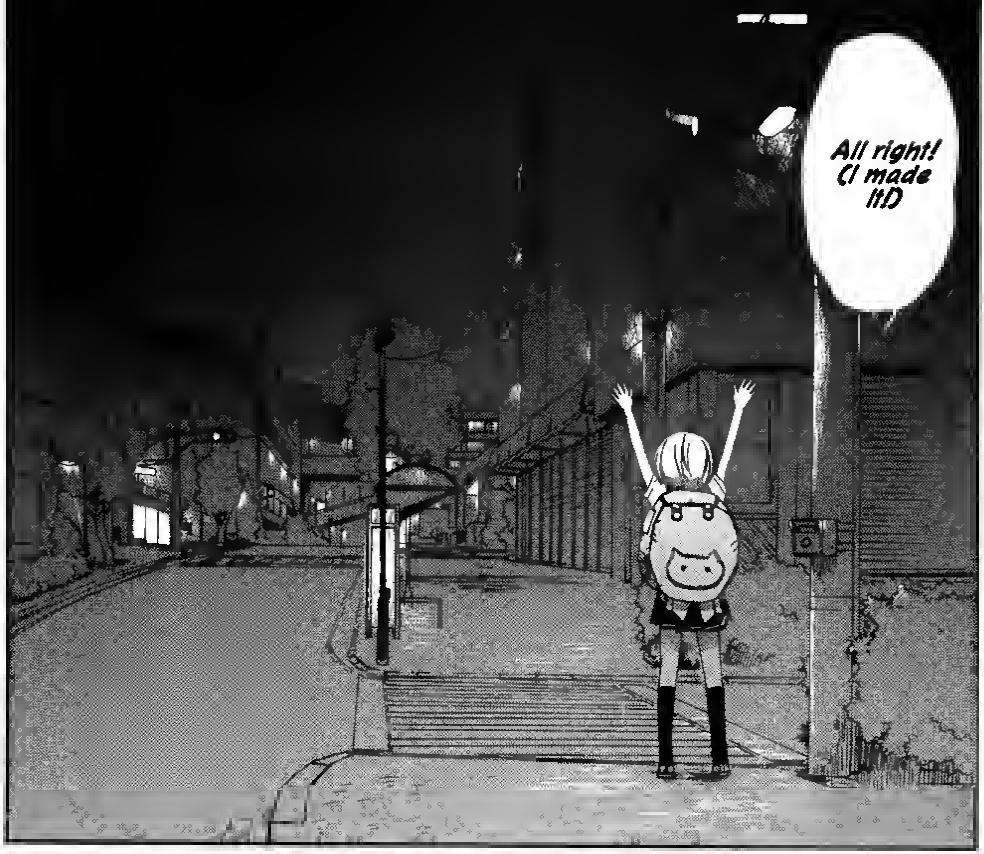


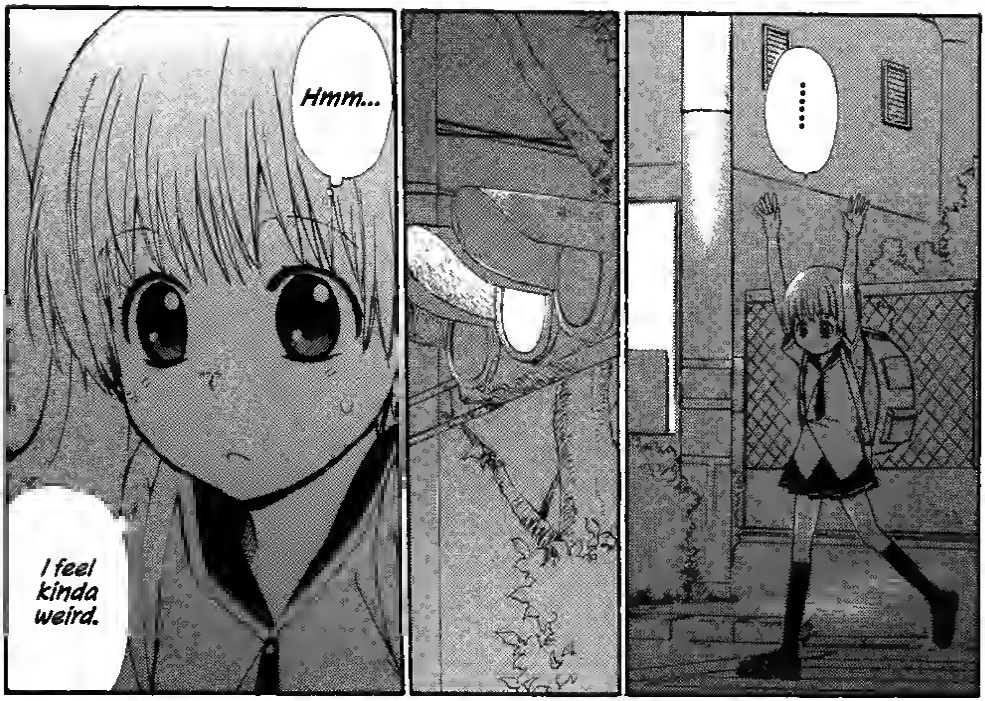
Don't worry about it!
I promise I'll do great in high school!
Sorry I can't make it to your opening ceremony.
Wow! Dad, you never get up this early!
You're heading out, Neko?
Hey...
You're leaving for school already, Sis?
...the first day of your new school year, could I?
I couldn't miss...
Oh, Ken! You're awake?
Yawn.
We just got up.


Heh heh.
.....
Take care!
Mom, Dad, Ken...thank you.

I won't let you down!
...huh?

ガタン
Just two more stops.
Oh!
Yeah... This is the way home.
I'm going home!
Just a little further...
...and I'll be there!


All right! (I made it!)


Hmm...
I feel kinda weird.
.....

Everything...
The train, the traffic lights, even the crosswalks—it feels like it's been forever since I left.
Doesn't help that it's night.
.....
!
My house keys!
Ohh, where did I put them...?
Sis?
Huh?

Keys?
Um... looking for my keys.
What're you doing?
Heh.
Ken...?
.....
Y--
Yes!
.....
Aren't you coming in?
Why? Do I look taller?
And what are you doing out so late?
I was craving ice cream, so I went to the corner store.
Hey... Did you grow?
Ken's always got it together.
But...

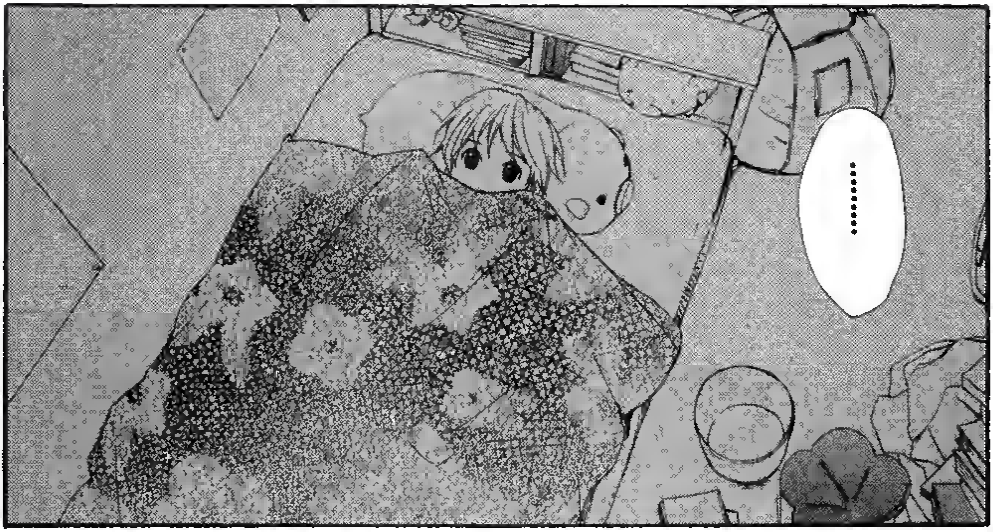
You really should've called first, you know.
Dad's not home yet, and Mom's asleep.
Of course.
Where're Mom and Dad?
.....
How about a bath?
Definitely!
FUKUTA
That's fine.
The futon's good to go, though.
We haven't fixed up your room since you left.
Welcome home.
.....
And Sis...

Aaah...
I'm so anxious...
I've started watching these...
...fun five-minute educational shows. They explain stuff really clearly.
They're only on at night.
Hmm?
Ken, what're you still doing up?
They really do explain it all in just five minutes!
I know, right?
I had no idea he was into that.
Huh.

I'm already in high school...
...and Ken's only in fourth grade!
And he's using my spoon.
What?
Eyeing my ice cream?
I don't care about your ice cream!
.....
Aha! I figured out why you came home!

Huh?
?
Am I wrong?
It's summer break!
Right?
Nope, you got it!
Summer break starts early in high school!
.....
I'm glad I came home...
...but...
...I still left Morimori.
What do I do now?
...really?
Uh huh! Totally!
And by the way, that's my spoon.

I wonder if Sensei will be upset.
..to what bothering you...
The least I can do is listen...
I never even told anyone I was leaving.
And Miiko...
I hope she gets to sleep okay.
There's still school tomorrow.
Kotaro and Ume-chan must already be in bed.
Sasuke-kun...
"I'll make sure..."
"...you don't have to leave the school."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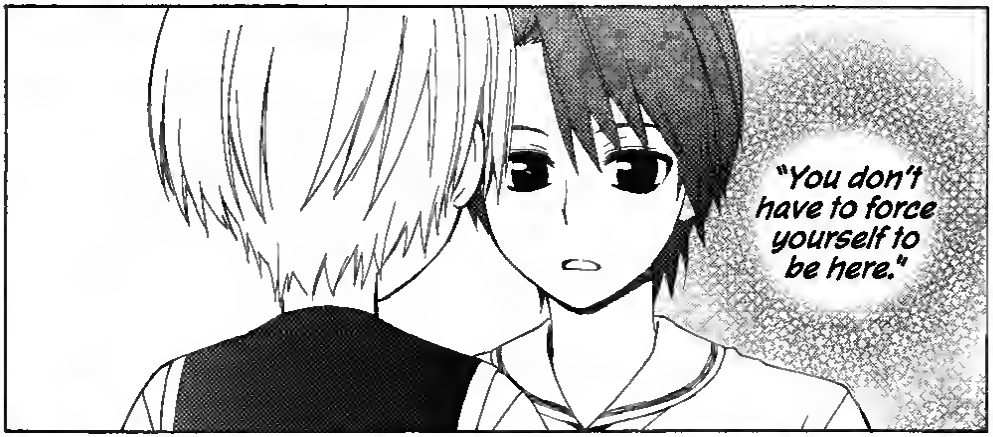
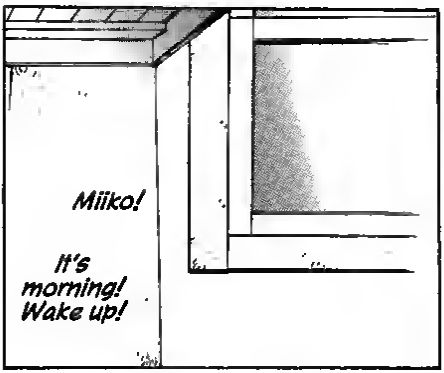

"You don't have to force yourself to be here."

Those two...
...do they like each other or not?


Miiko!
It's morning! Wake up!

Good morning!
Morning...
Miiko, you've been sleeping by yourself more lately!

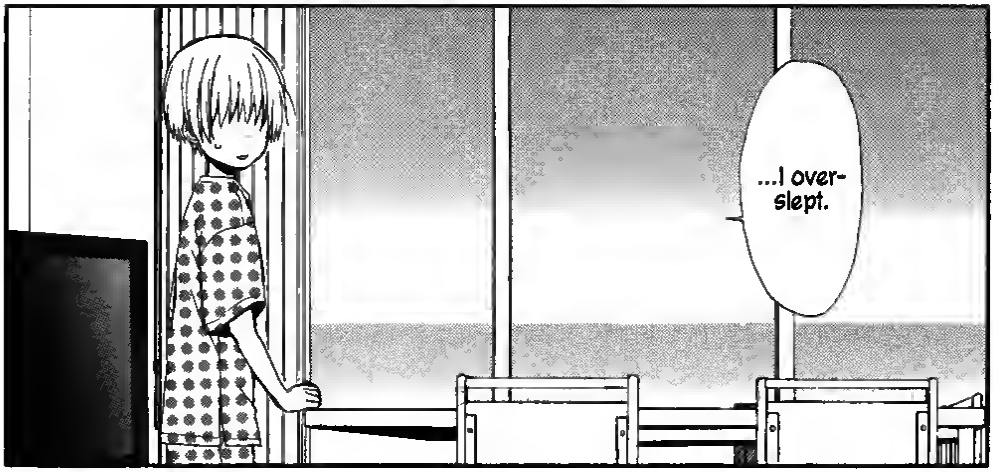
Good night, everyone.
I hope they're sleeping well...
...tonight.

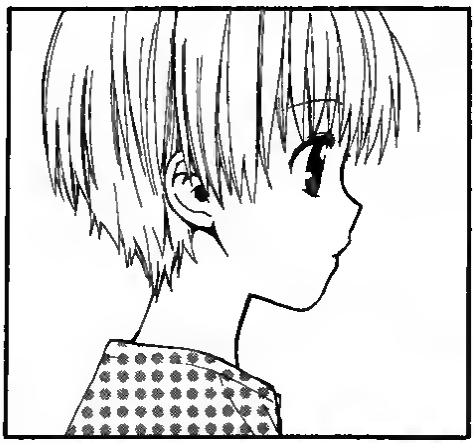
You're weird.
Because it's hot these days!
So I'm just your personal heater...?
What's a heater?
Never mind.
You're so smart, Fune!
Fune and Miiko are best friends!
Pet me!
But only if your hands are clean...

Someone's petting me.
It tickles.

Miiko...
She always liked to be petted.
Oh...

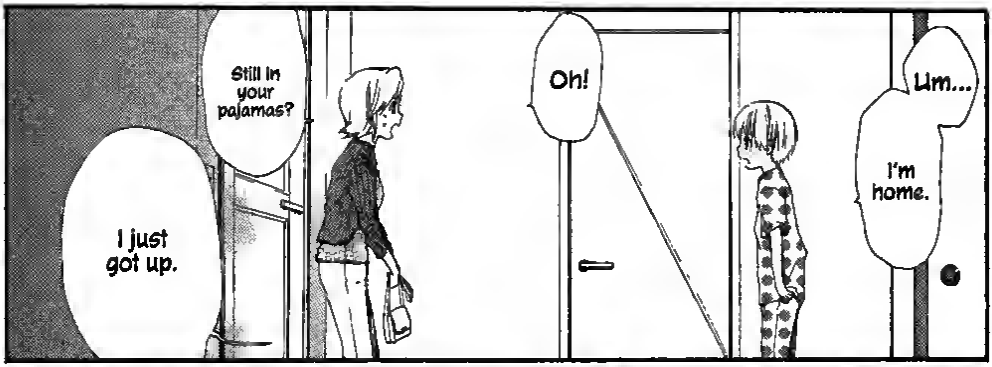
Is that you, Mom?
It's good to be home.
.....
Dear Neko,
Welcome home! You can heat up some stew for lunch! I'll be back around 2, so make sure to leave some snacks for Ken. See you later!
Love, Mom

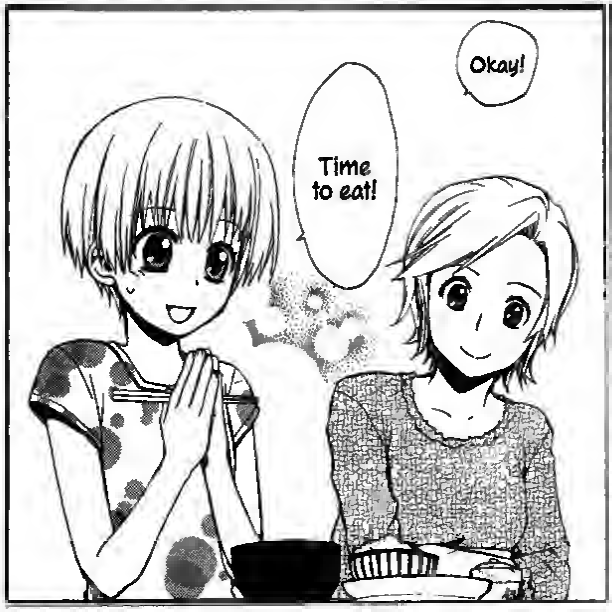


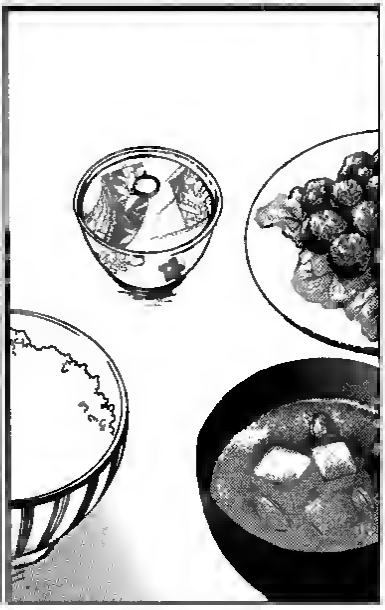


It's so quiet.

It kinda feels like everything that's happened was just one long dream.


Um...
I'm home.
Oh!
Still in your pajamas?
I just got up.


Okay!
Time to eat!



.....
Eh?
How is it?
She's staring at me.
She always used to do that.
It's so embarrassing.
I wonder if it was Mom...
...who patted my head when I was sleeping.

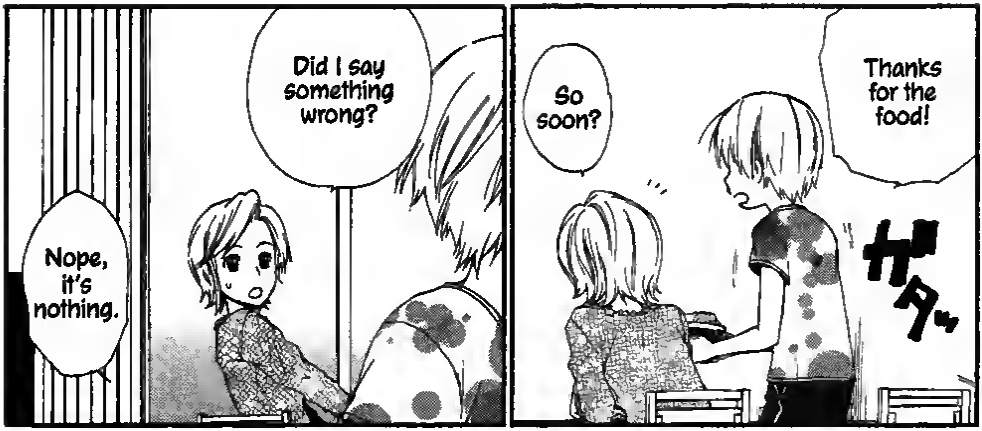
I guess not much has changed after all.
Ah!
There's the kettle!
The food is still the same.
It tastes and smells so familiar.
So?
How's school been?

Drink some tea!
COUGH COUGH
Well...
How is it strange?
Let's see...
...it's kind of a strange school...
...but it's fun.
The end.
How so?
I mean my classmates.
What do I say?
Um... there's my roommate.
We're in a dorm...
...and she's really sensitive about smells and stuff.
I mean, I'm handling it okay.
I used to be pickier, but now things don't bother me as much.

I'm glad to hear it!
So you get along, then?
I think so.
Y-yeah.
This is Sakurai.
"I'm so glad!"
Yeah.
.....
She's really cute, and...
...there's a guy with a huge crush on her.
"Mean Fune!"
"You're so bossy."

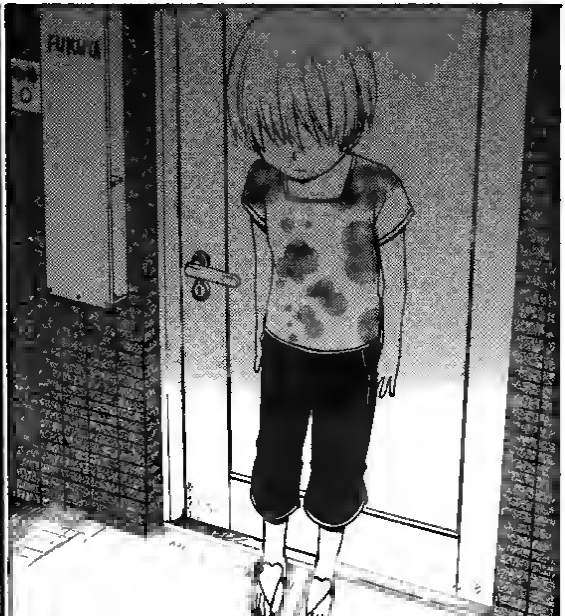
"I think that's wonderful."
"Let's go!"
"Are you ready..."
"...to join the ninja club?!"
"Fukuta-san!"
Well, it sounds like you're settling in just fine.
Am I right?
But recently ...
...there was someone I was getting close to.
.....
That's wonderful.
...yeah.

Oh--! Should we talk about the birds and the bees?
It's not like that.
Um... what're you doing, Mom?
I'll forget if I don't write it down.
So, was this kid you were close with a boy or a girl?
A boy.
Mom's Memo
.....



Takuma-kun must be having an even harder time.

And my being here doesn't change anything.



How do I decide what to do?

I'm just running away.
I couldn't say anything to anyone.
But...
...what should I do now?
Miori
!

.....
Sasuke-kun...?
Hey--!

Wait up!
Can it...?
No way! It can't be him!
ガクッ
.....?!!
.....
Didn't watch my step...

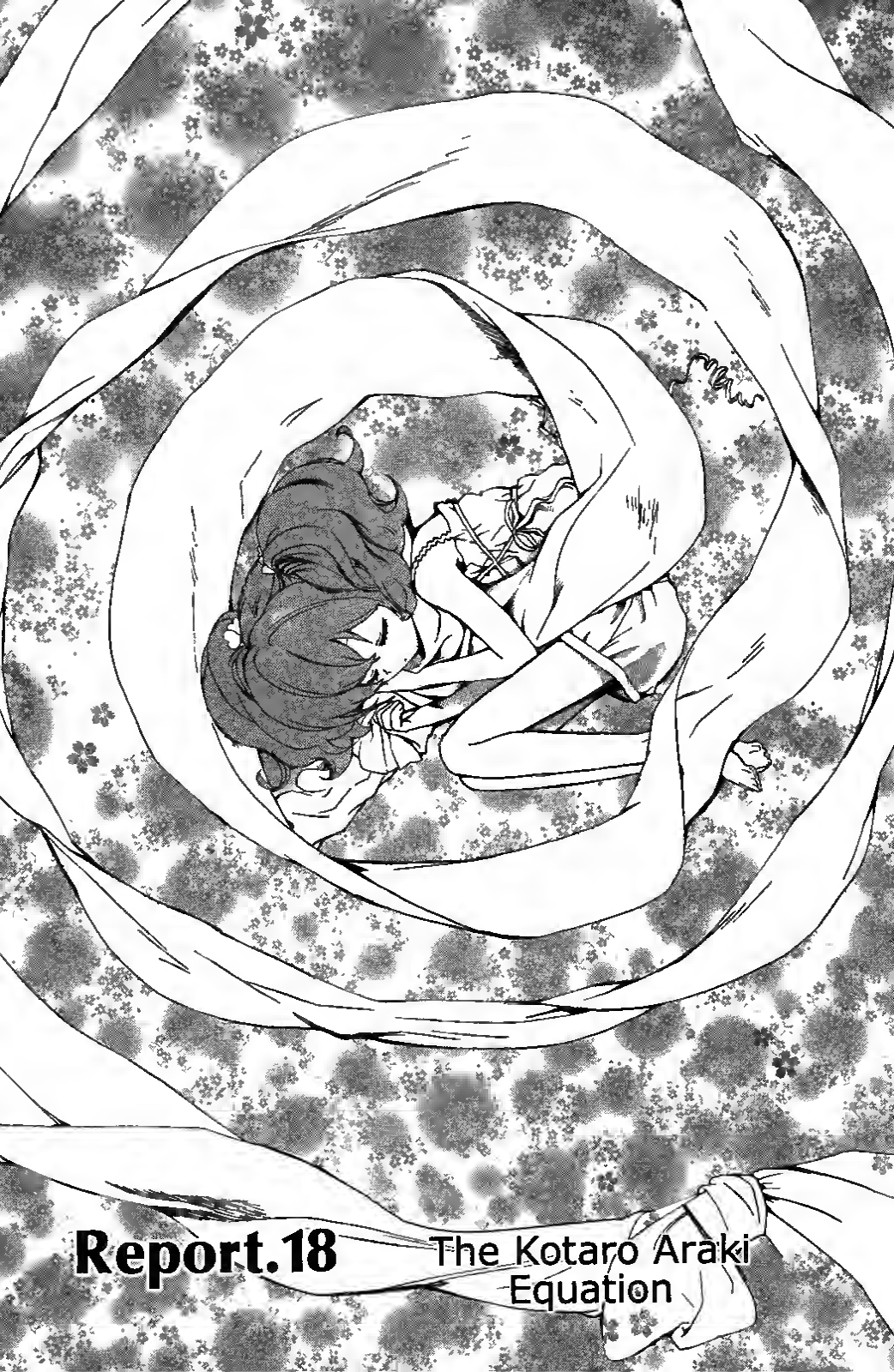
That black cat...
I might have the wrong cat...
...but it looks so familiar.
I must be seeing things.
Of course he's not here.
Get a grip!
But...
ギュー
Everyone's in class right now!
He can't be h--

You're here!
Fune!!
Huh...?! Wh-what're you doing here, Kotaro?!
ぎゅむっ
It's Fune!
What a relief!
I've been looking all over for you.

Come on, Fune!
Let's go home to Morimori!
Wait a minute!
Um...
I mean...

...didn't you know...
.....
...I'm human?

...you what?
.....
.....
.....
What're you talking about?
Guess the cat's out of the bag.



Report.18 The Kotaro Araki Equation

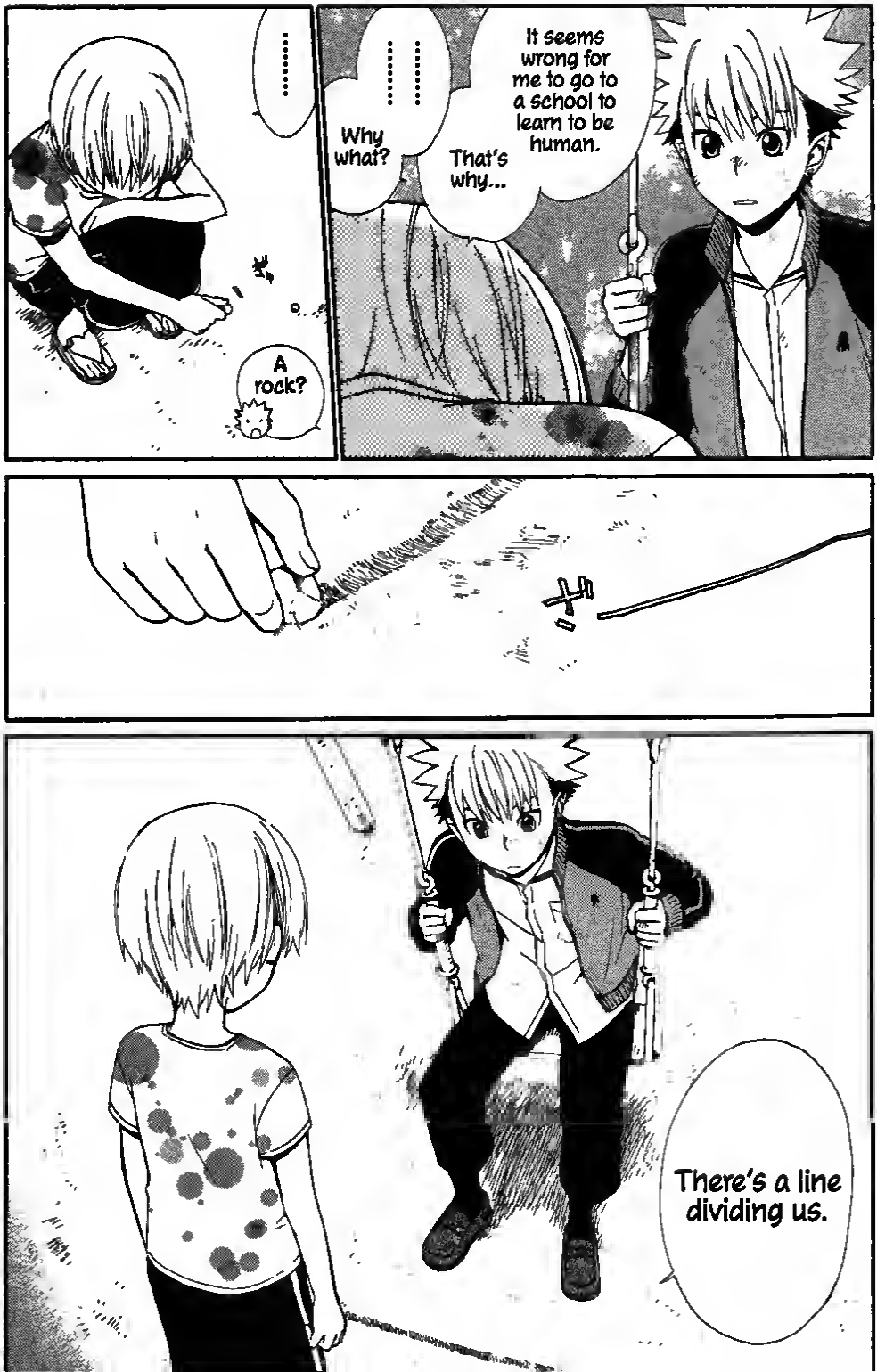
What're you going to do about the three students who missed class today?
Watanuki-sensei!
That, and...
...I saw Kotaro-kun slipping out late last night. Looks like they might've had a rendezvous planned.
I'm just concerned because nobody's asking about them.
What's the matter, Sasuke?
This is sudden.
Maybe they got lost in the woods.
.....

He said Fukuta might be leaving the school.
I ran into your brother ... ...this morning before class.
We're in the same club, and she wanted to talk to me about something important...
I was just heading over to see the headmaster.
.....
She'd never leave Morimori!

I'm sure she'll be back.
Just yesterday I told her she could talk to me about anything.
I want it to be that way, but...
...maybe I'm not all that reliable
.....
She'll come back.
So when she does...
.....
...please welcome her home.

Just trust me.
Current Situation
Searching?
Left?
I know.
They were close friends.
White-1

So you're saying...
...you went to Morimori even though you're human?
I don't know how else to put it, Kotaro.
.....
But...
...you're still *Fune*, right?
.....


.....
A rock?
.....
Why what?
That's why...
It seems wrong for me to go to a school to learn to be human.
There's a line dividing us.

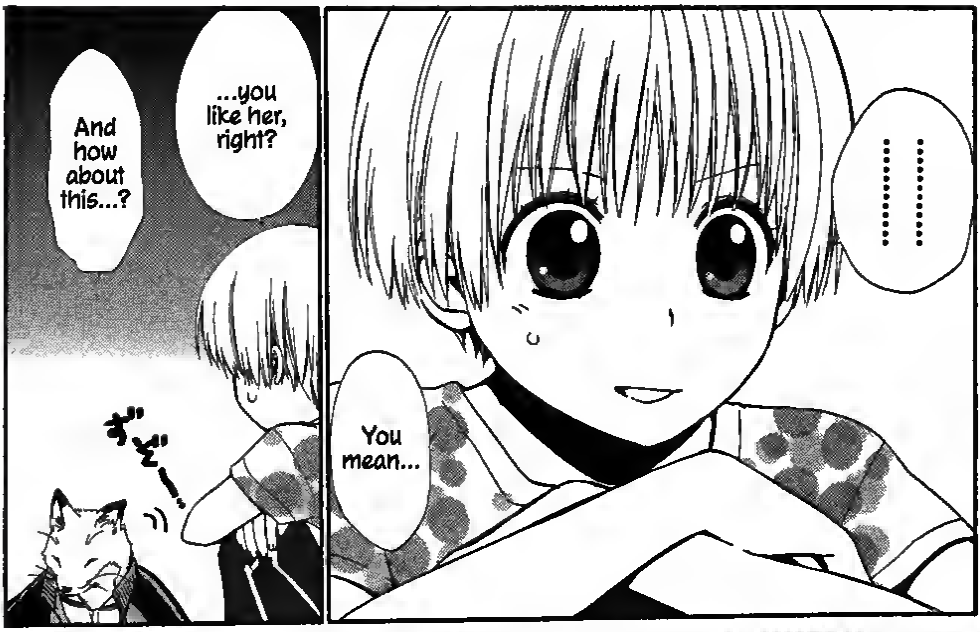
"I'm sorry."
"It's because I'm human."
I...I can't cross it.
At Morimori.
...you...
...were there.
But...
I was, but now...
...I just ...
...I don't think I can be there anymore.
I mean ...

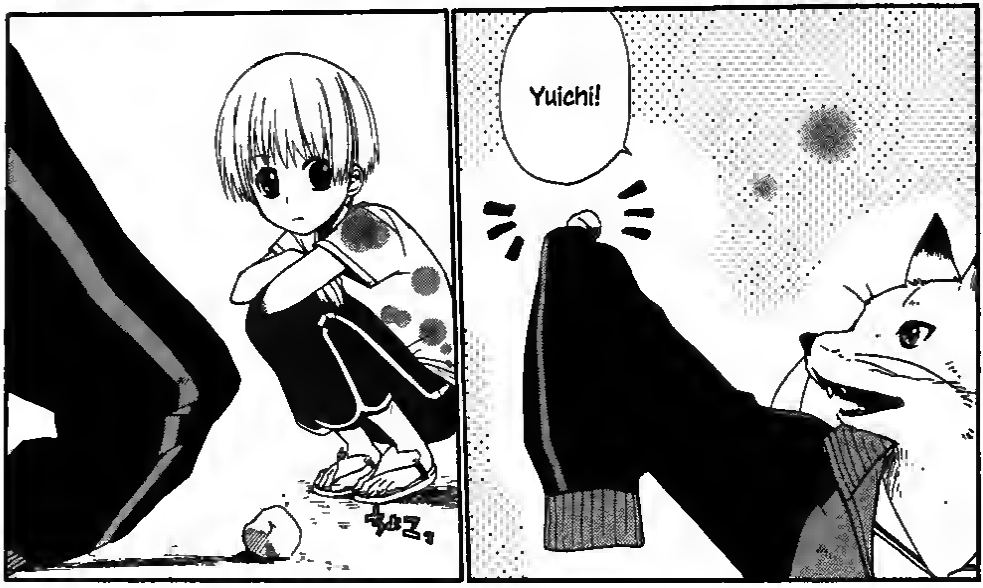
Um...
...doesn't this shock you at all?
It seems like it should.
.....
But...
POUR

...I came here to stop you, Fune.
What does this line...
...even mean?
Is it something bad?
I don't really know, but...
...is it wrong?
It's not dividing us.

The line...
.....
What is it?
.....

How'd you draw such a solid line between us?
You're pretty cool, Kotaro.
...how about this?
That's not all...
.....
.....
it's Miiko.


...you like her, right?
And how about this...?
You mean...
.....


Yuichi!

.....
Shin.
Ruka.
Kama-boko.
Ko-taro--!
I can't keep track of so many names!
And Watanuki-sensei!
Give me a second!
What the heck am I doing...?
Makichi!

Mike
smile
Like
Mike
Like
Mike
Like
Mike

It doesn't matter if you're not human!
I mean...
...we're still friends!
It's really hard..
...to truly understand...
...how other people feel...
Kotaro...
...But it's okay to try to imagine it...
... right?

Miiko...
...I'm sorry for lying for so long, but I'm not really a cat.
...and maybe I was a little selfish...
Takuma-kun...
...may not be near me anymore...
...connecting you and me?
So it's okay to have a friendship line...

?
Yeah.
.....
Heh heh.
The look on his face says...
"... you had to ask?"
I'm happy.

ぽんっ
ぴくっ
So happy...
And now I see...
...how selfish I've been all this time.
Which is it?
.....
Leaving like that was selfish!
...i already spilled everything to Miiko!
There's too much to deal with!
But...

...but...
.....

I...
I'm going home!!!
I'm going home--!
What're you doing, Sis?
Ken! What about you?!
!
I'm heading home from school.

...sorry.
What are all these?
Don't move!
Oh!
Sorry!
It's such...
...a simple thing.
But I feel like all of my drawing in the playground dirt...
...helped me get my feelings sorted out.
I'm sorry.
I may have run away 'cause I was so worried and confused...
...but I'm not ready...
...to give in yet.

I'm sorry!
BOW
I'm heading back now.
You sure straightened out fast.
Is it because you're wearing your uniform?
Must be one tough school.
No, it's not that.
I...
I told myself I'd try my best.
I'll make sure...
...to call you and Dad and Ken...
...again soon.

Okay.
Have a safe trip back.
Hey, Kotaro...

What would you have done if you couldn't find me, or if I'd said I wouldn't go back?
Huh...? Er...
.....
I didn't think of that.
Really?
Ha ha.
That's Kotaro for you.
But I wonder...
...does he really understand that I'm human?
Not that it matters anymore.
But I'm really glad you came, Kotaro.
Did you get lost on the way?
This black cat led me here.

That's him there!
?
A black cat?
I just followed him...
...until I got here.
Sasuke-kun?

How would Sasuke-kun know...
...where I was?
You'll catch a cold.
Does he know what I'm feeling, too?
Either way...
...I know I'll be okay, no matter how worried I get.

Um...
Why are we running?
Watanuki-sensei will be mad if we don't get back fast.
I got back home safe and sound, after all.
I'll be okay because...
...I have the ground under my feet.

Attendance is a bit low, I see...
It's a great day, and it's time...
...to bring this ninja club meeting to order!
Well, we've lost several freshmen.
This is where you tell us if anything unusual has happened.
Now for today's report! Sound off!

More importantly...
...Sasuke Sagami in the freshman white class is your brother, isn't he?
It's too early to call this a failure.
What do you think?
We didn't even see where she left from, either.
First Yuichi Takuma, and now Neko Fukuta, probably.
I don't like seeing this kind of trashy attack, especially when we've lost several students recently.
Honestly, I don't trust their sources.
I'd like to bring up the journalism club's cover story for tomorrow's issue.
Here it is-- cross-species romance.

You're right!
Sasuke's in love?
Whoa...!
A Stirring Romance Begins!!
Cats and Raccoons-- The Forbidden Love

That's why she got cornered in the art club so often.
The color's name doesn't matter.
They were in the same class.
And even though they were different species, they had some things in common.
Umemo
Be nice, Silvino.
You can be so flaky sometimes, Kamabasan.
All that matters is what you want to draw.
But...it's fun...
...and pretty.
I know that all too well.
Yeah.
Can you explain it?
I don't know that much, really.
S-same here!
It's okay. There are plenty of things I don't know.

Report.19

Sparkly Beginnings

I ended up...
...coming back.
どきっ どきっ
That's it.
Look, I found it!
We can get in through here!
It's okay.
It's okay.
It's okay.
It's okay.
It's okay.
Kotaro.
Thanks for doing all this.
Ko-

Wait for me!
He went without me!
Gone
...huh?
Well, class is over already.
Sure is quiet...
.....

He probably is.
I did play hooky all day.
Let's head to the dorms!
Sensei must be angry.
Y-yeah.
I wonder if he sent anyone to my room to get me.
Like that time I skipped class when I had a cold.
Watanuki-sensei can be pretty harsh when he's mad.
Tell me about it.
If he did, I bet Miiko went to class like she was supposed to.

Hold it right there.
Gah!!! Gh-ghost--!
You'd better apologize!
.....
Ow, ow, ow, ow!
Do you have any idea how worried I was?
So, then...
...tell me why you skipped school today
.....
.....

Y-yes. That's all.
Is that all?
We got lost in the woods!
Er...
Well, we...
Fune was--
...really, really sorry, though!
I'm...
...I'm all right now!
But...!
But--

I won't lose my way again!

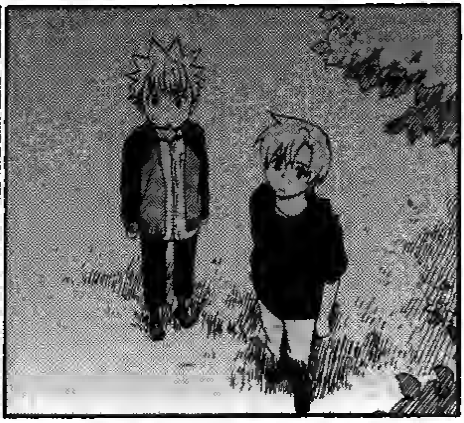
Uh huh!
You'd tell me about it?
I really am!
You're sure you're okay?
.....
...all right.
...yes, sir.
You know, even teachers feel sad when we're left out.
Huh?
By the way...
...why isn't Suzuhara with you?

I'm such an idiot!
Miiko's a magical animal...
...so I just assumed she'd be fine as long as she's here.
But who knows how she reacted to me leaving like that?!
ばんっ
Miiko--!

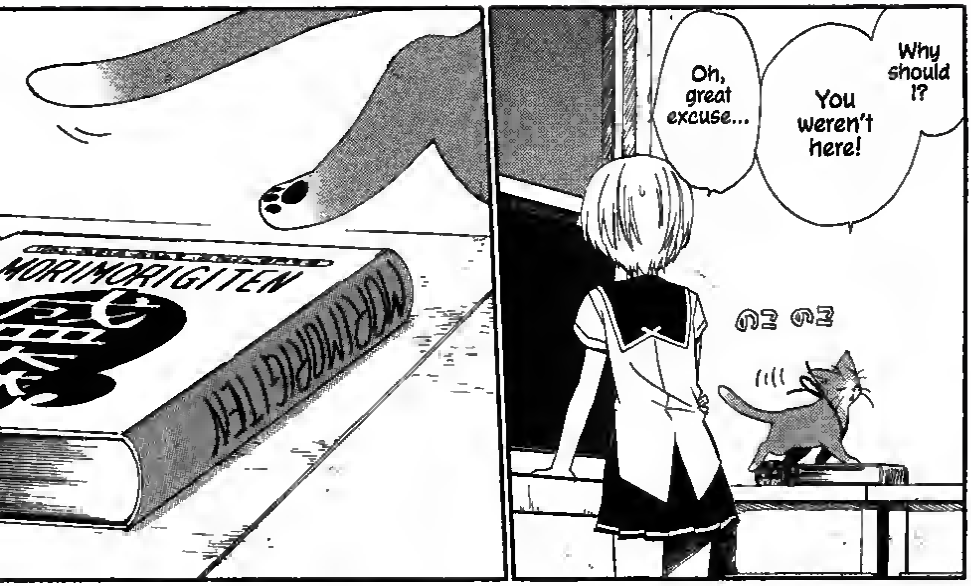
Purrrr...
.....
Fune?
.....
Wow, do I feel stupid.
Sneeze
.....
Welcome back.

But...
...I'm glad.

She was sleeping!



Miiko, you didn't go to school today, did you?
What?


MORIMORIGITEN
Oh, great excuse...
You weren't here!
Why should I?

MORIMORIGITEN
森

.....
Now's still--
Wait!
Thanks!
Kotaro!
It's a secret, right?!
'Night!
Thank you so much!

You said you were human, Fune.
!!!!
That's what you said...
...and then you left.

Strange dream I had, huh?
She thinks it was a dream?!
But I guess ...
...I should be glad...
...she thought it was...
... just a dream.
Miiko--
.....
Eep!
Ume-chan, how long have you been there?
Um... excuse me.

I'm really sorry, but...
...I was wondering what happened today.
Oh, don't apologize!
We're doing just fine!
Fune's a hu--
Mmph!
And, um, Kotaro-kun?
Kotaro?
He's fine. I think he'll be back in class tomorrow.
Really?
.....
You'll be there tomorrow too, right?
Yup! Thanks...
...for coming to check on us.
Oh, it's nothing.

Don't worry about it. I'm just glad you're okay.
Sorry about that, Miiko.
ぽっ
……
Good night!
はぁん
Miiko wasn't finished yet!
……
Miiko...
なで
I wasn't!
Don't treat me like I'm stupid!
Yes, you were! I was in the middle of talking!
S-sorry.

Um...
How do I say this to her?
.....

Miiko...
.....
Please don't forget...
...that dream you told me about.
Okay?

Now, let's go to bed.
It's about time...
...I started being braver.
Fune?
I'm gonna do my best!
Yeah!

That's right.

I have to thank him for helping me back home.

White-1
I've got to thank him.
Ahh...!
White-1

Good morning, everyone!
Fukuta
Morning, Fukuta-nyan!
Suzu-nyan, too!
Are you feeling better?
Yep! Just fine!
Just needed a day of rest.
Did I miss anything?
Nope!
You're looking a lot better.
Wanna see yesterday's homework?
Good. It's all the same as always.
Oh, by the way...
...has anyone seen Sasuke-kun?

Um... sure?
.....?
What's going on?
Let's go check it out.
He might be with Kamaba-san.
Maybe he's at the art club?
Kotaro!
Good morning!
...
Mornin'!
ガラッ
.....?
Good to see you, Miiko!

Get away, you stinky fox!
.....
Nope, haven't seen him.
Why're you looking for him?
A-anyway!
Have you seen Sasuke-kun?
He hasn't shown up yet.
.....
You should know!
Remember how he disappeared the moment we got back?

Well, he's the one who told me to go get you.
Wha--?
It--it's nothing like that!
I didn't know you...
...and Sasuke were so close.
Huh?
Re--
Really?
I guess we're... sorta close...
I already know.
Art Room

You're here to ask me what this is about.
But you know...
...I'm not in the journalism club.

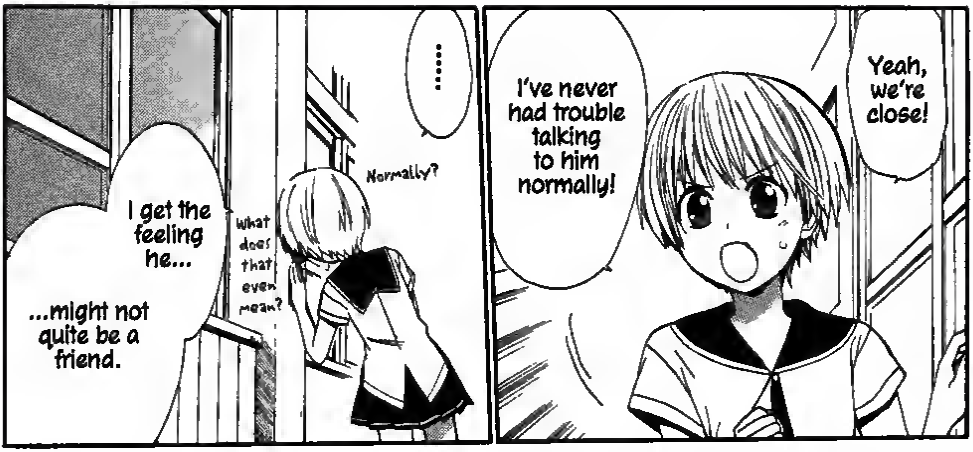
I thought it was strange that there were rumors that didn't start in my class.
Pfft
.....
Did you cut this out?

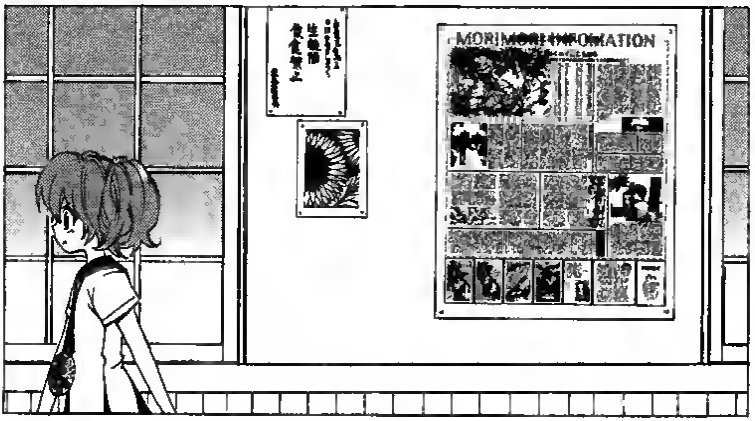
What are you so mad about?
ぱしっ

Kamaba-san has nothing to do with this.
Excuse me?
That's quite the accusa-tion.
...the only one who could've written it.
Even if I can't prove it, you're...
Oh?
I think YOU have nothing to do with this, Sasuke.

You must have a rough idea of what my task here is.
I wanted to ask more about you, but it's getting to be a pain.

I don't care what you do anymore. Just take Fukuta-san and get out of here.
That'll fix everything.
She's in the way.

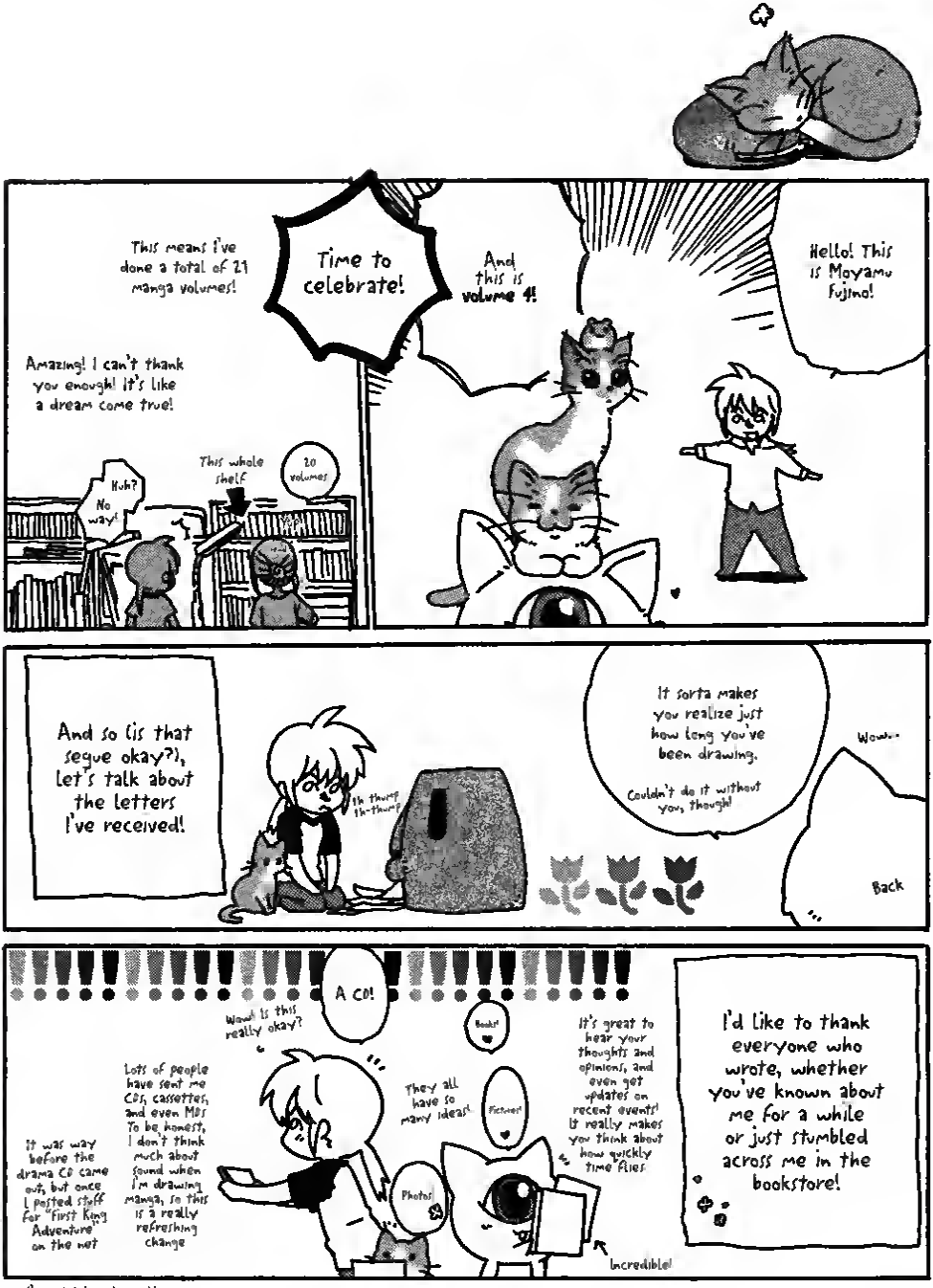

I get the feeling he...
...might not quite be a friend.
what does that even mean?
Normally?
.....
I've never had trouble talking to him normally!
Yeah, we're close!



Animal Academy 4 End

Behold my ninja club belt! (Not!)

Postscript [4]


This means I've done a total of 21 manga volumes!
Time to celebrate!
And this is volume 4!
Hello! This is Mayamu Fujimo!
Amazing! I can't thank you enough! It's like a dream come true!
This whole shelf
20 volumes
Huh?
No way!
And so (is that segue okay?), let's talk about the letters I've received!
Uh thurf Uh-thurf
It sorta makes you realize just how long you've been drawing.
Couldn't do it without you, though!
Wowee
Back
A CD!
Wow! Is this really okay?
Books!
Pictures!
Photos!
They all have so many ideas!
It's great to hear your thoughts and opinions, and even get updates on recent events! It really makes you think about how quickly time flies
Incredible!
Lots of people have sent me CDs, cassettes, and even MDs! To be honest, I don't think much about sound when I'm drawing manga, so this is a really refreshing change
It was way before the drama CD came out, but once I posted stuff for "First King Adventure" on the net
I'd like to thank everyone who wrote, whether you've known about me for a while or just stumbled across me in the bookstore!
I'm a total web-noob!
I know this is a bit late, but still, thank you!

I'm sorry, but I'll try to do better from now on.
You don't need to apologize...
MODEST
I'm so sorry writing such a long letter, but I'll wrap it up now.
Aw.
But I was enjoying it so much...
I'm so sorry! I don't quite know how old to-and-ish but I hope you like this
I should also mention that I have lots of modest readers!
Maybe there's no set age.
There were letters from many different people.
I just hope I'm expressing my appreciation well enough.
And I'd love to hear your feedback
I hope you read it
I know I've taken too long to say this, but thank you very much for picking up this book!
This must mean that there are a lot of nice people out there!
I'm just surrounded by good souls.
And sorry for not always writing back.

Fan Mail:
TOKYOPOP
c/o Animal Academy Editor
5900 Wilshire Blvd, Suite 2000
Los Angeles, CA 90036

Bye bye!

I hope we meet again next volume!

Let's do this!

And that about wraps things up! I still have plenty of things to improve on!

?
Oh! I forgot!
SQUISH
Sorry, Miiko!
Sensei asked me to punish you for playing hooky.
Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow!
Ouch!
My bad.
Miiko refused to speak to Neko for the rest of the day.
You shouldn't skip class without telling anyone!
It's so rude!
Words of wisdom from the class prez.
S-sorry!

Reset in half a day

HAKOBUNE HAKUSHO 4

Minoru Watanuki

- Raccoon dog (tanuki).
- Morimori High School 1st year White Class.
- Homeroom teacher.
- Species: Nyctereutes Procyonides.
- Rumor has it he used to drive a motorcycle. He's an excellent teacher for magical animals because he really cares about humans.

Zenda Miyoshi

- Cat
- Morimori High School 3rd year student, Blue Class.
- Ranked 12th in attendance.
- Species: Felix catus.
- First became interested in humans a long time ago, when he was taken to a veterinarian. He believes ninjas were expert information gatherers.

In the next volume of...

The rumor mill sure is turning at Morimori! Talk of love is in the air, but strangely, there's even more talk of ninjas, too. Plus, the mystery of the Sagami brothers deepens, and Fune finally gets to meet the very unusual school headmistress!